



White
Ribbon
Hostel
1978

91.33

Cambridge SOCIAL ISSUES Chronicle by Mike Petty

Includes reports on workhouses, almshouses and hostels etc., homelessness, drunkenness, provision for elderly etc published in Cambridge newspapers 1888 to 1990

headlines

Clara Rackham recalled conditions in the Cambridge workhouse when she was a Guardian. There were a number of children with their parents. These were either illegitimate or the families of tramps who took refuge in the winter and took to the roads again in summer. The children and babies were cared for by the best of the inmates. Orphans were boarded out in foster homes. Aged people sat in their crowded day-rooms, clothed in their workhouse garb, allowed out on alternate Mondays. Dinner three days a week was a plate of pea soup and hunk of bread. 64 03 20a

1891

Stephen Mansfield founds four almshouses, South Terrace [2.5]

1894

Description Bedder's slum house, Cambridge Review vol.15 p221 [NI.3.5]

1895

Victoria Friendly Society build Millers Almshouses, Victoria Road [2.2]

1896 03 30

Description of visit to Cambridge workhouse [1.7]

1897 05 26

A considerable amount of misapprehension appears to exist in regard to the provision of music for the use of the inmates of the Cambridge Workhouse. As a matter of fact that institution is unusually well provided with musical instruments. In addition to the organ recently erected in the chapel there are five or six other instruments - harmoniums and pianos – distributed throughout the house so that the inmates have frequent opportunities of enjoying music in their own rooms. Indeed it is safe to say that

more music is heard in the wards in a single week than the majority would have heard in their own homes in 12 months 1897 05 26

1900

1901 10 30

A new Diocesan Lodge for the Girls' Friendly Society was opened at Hills Road, Cambridge. Several spacious apartments will be used as recreation and classrooms with lectures on nursing, home hygiene, needlework and astronomy and classes for musical drill and singing. There are rooms for girls being trained for domestic service & accommodation for lady boarders and visitors. The old Servants' Training Home, formerly situated in King Street has ceased to exist as a separate institution. It had been established for 80 years and more than 400 girls had passed through; it had also afforded a home to many strange and friendless girls 01 10 30

1901 11 15

The Cambridge Church Army Labour Home was not a lounging place. It was a place where men worked. Each man won something like 6s per week by his work at the Home, by which he provided for his lodging and keep while he was there. Five had left for the pathetic reason that they did not like work. It was a home, not a mere workhouse, nor a shelter, nor a pastime, where men were taken at their best instead of at their worst. Its intention was not to draw drunkards, criminals and vagrants to Cambridge. As it offered work, which the careless vagrant abhorred, the Home's negative effect was almost more important than its positive effective 01 11 15

1901 12 05

The Church Street Mission is quite distinct from the Cambridge Female Refuge but is auxiliary to it. Miss Elsdon walks about the street at night and is able to persuade women who have gone astray to go with her to the Mission House and stay in safety for a few days until they can be received into the Refuge. Sometimes women come voluntarily and sometimes they are brought by the police. She also provides an escort for female prisoners on their discharge, meeting them at the prison and escorting them to the railway station, thus protecting them from evil influences in the town at the first moment of their freedom 01 12 05

1903 08 04

Cambridge Borough has had its pride wounded by the London Express charging it with having incurable slums and possessing filthier homes than Whitechapel. In reply Mr Campkin, a Guardian said: "There is no doubt there is an amount of poverty and squalor in Cambridge but there has been a vast improvement in the St Matthew's district over the last 40 years. There is evidence of the effects of drink in some parts of the town but in the Romsey and Petersfield district the residents are respectable working people" 03 08 04

1903 08 04

Commenting on the Cambridge slums Dr Roper said: "I think even the very worst are fast becoming demolished; take St Peter's Court, Castle Street, they are pulling that down. In consequence that there are large families in the poor quarters a woman very often has to go out and work as well as her husband to keep things going, and they can't keep their houses quite so clean as they otherwise might. In New Street you will not see much dirt or dilapidation, though in summer time the people are sitting outside nearly half-dressed in consequence of the heat. But their homes are not so bad as you might imagine". 03 08 04

1903 12 28

The idea of a happy Christmas being spent by those who are unfortunate enough to inhabit a workhouse is to most people incomprehensible. But in Cambridge workhouse Christmas Day is a happy day. The master tempers discipline with mercy and sheds a small ray of sunshine upon those whose lives have been darkened with misfortune. He has done more for the salvage of wrecked humanity than is ever likely to be known by the public at large 03 12 28

1904 05 18

The placid life of Linton has been stirred by a rumour that the dead body of a pauper had been sold by the Master of the Workhouse to the Cambridge School of Anatomy. This was a perfectly lawful proceeding under the Anatomy Act which provides that the bodies of unclaimed paupers may be used for scientific study. The matter had been debated by the Board of Guardians who voted five for and five against but the Chairman declined to give the casting vote. The Master had taken it upon himself to send the body to Cambridge. But it was not 'sold'. 1904 05 18

1904 09 06

Sir – In November a Cambridge man borrowed £20 from a money lender, agreeing to pay £30 back by payments of £5 per month. He duly made the first four payments, thus returning all that was advanced in cash. The last two payments were made, one in May, five weeks after it was due, and the other in July, six weeks late. The borrower still owes £21. In times of depression and bad trade as in Cambridge at present is it unreasonable to ask newspapers not to carry advertisements for such moneylenders? – Citizen CDN 6.9.1904 et seq

1904 11 23

The Cambridge Female Refuse is sorely in need of increased support for their accounts show a deficit of over £250. The amount realised by laundry work during the last six weeks was very much higher than for a considerable time past but they could not rely on a continuance of a large amount of washing and must get more subscribers. During the year nine girls had been admitted to the Home and eight sent out to service after the completion of their training. But for the first time in many years there were four cases to record of probable failure. 1904 11 23

1904 11 26

Distress is likely to be more acute in Cambridge this winter than for many years past owing principally to the slump in the building boom locally and the depression in trade generally. The Church Army has evolved a scheme through which married men may obtain work. A number of tickets are issued to philanthropists who fill in the name of a married man in need of employment and offers to repay the Army one shilling towards the cost of employment. The man is found work wood chopping or log sawing and is paid about 2s.6d. a day. But the Home is now overloaded with the produce of its labour and there are 25,000 bundles of wood which must be sold to the public before it can continue. 1904 11 26

1904 11 30

The anticipation of the probability of distress in Cambridge some weeks ago, before the wintry weather came to give a keener edge to hunger and a more painful and sharp reminder to the poor of their inadequate resources in food and clothing, was widely discussed but was felt to be unduly magnified. The Town Council vetoed a proposal to supply aid to the unemployed. But Miss Wilson of the Nursing Institution on Newmarket Road began to undertake the provision of free dinners to which the children of poor parents resort for their midday meal of soup and bread. "We give the children as much as ever they can hold", she said. Boys in pitifully ragged garments and decrepit old women and little girls with starvation all too plainly written on their features come with jugs to take soup home to those unable through illness or lack of clothing to come themselves. CDN 30.11.1904

1904 12 31

For some time Miss Wilson and her hard-working band of ladies have been daily allaying the pangs of hunger in hundreds of little children and their mothers in the Newmarket Road area of Cambridge by giving them free dinners. Now their effort is brought to an end. Not only are the financial resources exhausted but the staff have physically worked themselves out. But on the very day that these free meals cease the CDN Shilling Fund commences its distribution of tickets for food, fuel and clothing, continuing the work they have been compelled to give up. Subscriptions continue to come steadily in with cheques from Messrs Starr and Rignall photographers, Moore and Company tobacconists and the Cambridge Waterworks Company CDN 31.12.1904

1905 02 14

Cambridge Women's Temperance Association have acquired the tenancy of an East Road property formerly known as the Barnwell Coffee Palace which they have transformed into 'The White Ribbon', a well-conducted temperance establishment at which palatable food and clean lodgings can be obtained at moderate prices. The position of the building in one of the poorer districts has led to some apprehension but care is to be taken to ensure that the frequenters of the establishment are somewhat more select than formerly. It is not intended for the tramp class but for young people who require lodgings. It contains 16 bedrooms with a tastefully-furnished sitting room 05 02 14a

1905 03 24

The begging fraternity appear to regard Chesterton as a Happy Hunting Ground. On the new estates, the De Freville and the Central the evil is particularly rampant and when the male members of the households are mostly away at business the weaker sex are particularly intimidated into relieving the able-bodied tramps who frequently threaten violence unless they receive assistance. One actually walked right into the kitchen and demanded money or food. The police have made an attempt to suppress this nuisance but when the principal penalty inflicted by magistrates is to discharge the beggar on his promising to leave town the evil quickly becomes as bad as ever. 05 03 24a

1905 08 19

Caxton workhouse inmates had a pound of suet pudding with treacle for dinner on Wednesday but left a great deal of it. On Thursday they had suet pudding again with a little bread and cheese but simply ate the bread and cheese and left the suet pudding. It was a waste of good stuff. Surely nobody could eat a pound of suet pudding for dinner? But the Master said some of them ate three or four pounds of it. It was decided to change to Irish stew on Wednesdays. 05 08 19

1905 09 21

The will of the late Mr Stephen Mansfield of Trumpington includes a bequest of £250 to Chesterton Baptist chapel where he once a teacher in the Sunday School. This is not his only benefaction to the village; there are five almshouses erected by him and their upkeep and stipends for the inmates are provided out of other property. He also subscribed to the Royal Albert and Victoria Friendly Societies' asylum and left £100 to the poor of Trumpington 05 09 21

1906 03 03

Church Army Home, Fair Street, report average age of inmates 33, average stay 63 days & 78 admitted [1.18]

1906 03 21

Since 1886 the parish of St Andrew the Less has theoretically been richer by the sum of £5,299 through the munificence of Frederick Bailey, a well-known brewer who resided at Burleigh House, Newmarket Road. Up to the present the riches have conferred no practical benefit but now a scheme has been formulated and income will flow to the relief of poor residents. There is also to be a commemoration service on his birthday. Now a poor parish will receive a substantial charity and the memory of a generous benefactor will be kept green for many an age. 06 03 21a

1906 08 23

A woman of about 30 years of age journeyed to Cambridge to meet the man who was the author of her 'trouble'. While she was in the train alone the child was born but on arrival at the station she behaved with such extraordinary circumspection that none of the railway officials suspected anything unusual had occurred. Carrying a bundle wrapped in underlinen under her arm, this extraordinary woman walked the length of the platform, hailed a cab and asked to be driven to the Workhouse. There her strength gave way and she swooned on the floor with the new-born babe beside her. They are both doing well. 06 08 23

1907 08 08

Survey of local pauperism, its extent & cost [2.19]

1908 02 22

Cambridge Guardians discussed the case of an old soldier who had served in the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny for whom they paid 2s 6d a week for a nurse. The old man had saved £20 out of his pension to pay for his funeral expenses, so that he should not be buried in a pauper's grave. But this had been seized by the relieving officer. They did not want the old man to have the money back so that his children should have the pleasure of spending it for their own comfort and then send him to the Union 08 02 22a

1908 04 11

Stokys almshouses history – 08 04 11a

1908 04 30

Cambridge Poor Law children policy – 08 04 30 & a

1908 09 25

A new economic era in the life of England has begun with the introduction of old age pensions. Every man or woman of 70 who has less than twelve shillings a week is entitled to walk into a post office and fill up a form to claim a supplementary income from public funds. In Cambridgeshire there are about 1,500 who are eligible and in Cambridge about 1,300. There are those who forecast an age of thriftlessness, improvidence and national bankruptcy. But we do not think there is any need to be alarmed. CWN 08 09 25 p5

1908 09 26

500 aged poor can apply for Old Age Pensions - “5/- (25p) a week for nothing”; have problems proving age [2.21]

1908 09 25

Old age pensions – committee constituted – 08 09 25 p8

1908 10 02

Although we are far removed from the din of industrial strife, the wave of depression that is sweeping over the trade of the country is making itself felt even in Cambridgeshire. What local industries we possess appear to be flourishing, labour on the land is fairly constant and the labour required by the colleges varies but little. But the number of people making use of the casual ward of Cambridge workhouses has been increasing with 818 vagrants during the previous fortnight as compared to 184 last year. CEN 08 10 02 p5

1908 10 09

As soon as dusk fell, the heavy gates of the Cambridge Workhouse opened upon the first of a tattered regiment of out-of-works, willing-to-works and never-will-works who demanded hospitality. Reports from all local unions show an abnormal leap in the number of vagrants who are seeking the shelter of the casual wards due to unemployment consequent on trade depression. The first were a pair of women, one pale and gaunt, one rotund and healthful. They are a washerwoman and a charwoman from Lancashire; neither has yet found work and they are returning to the North CWN 08 10 09 p2

1909

On occasions all provision for tramps at workhouse full [1.3]

1909 01 01

The Old Age Pensions Act comes into force and the post office is busy making the first payments to some half-million old people. In this part of the country many old folk are incredulous about the act, which they believe is too good to be true. But some pensioners in the East End of London have been

borrowing money against their pension order. But if a moneylender has taken a pensioner's book as a security for debt, the book can be recovered CWN 09 01 01

1909 01 08

Cambridgeshire took the advent of Old Age Pensions with very little fuss. For the first time in history veterans of toil claimed from the country the wherewithal to end their days in comparative comfort, free from the haunting dread of having to enter the 'House'. The pension varies from one to five shillings a week through the issue of what is known as the poor man's cheque book which is presented at the post office 09 01 08

1910

1910 01 14

Boarding out of pauper children, workhouse – 10 01 14f & g

1909 01 15

On Friday night a man died in an East Road Lodging House and the landlady was naturally anxious to relieve her house of the body at the earliest moment. She had no knowledge of the man's relatives and a 'parish burial' was ordered. The undertaker said she had wanted to put the body in the yard covered up with clothes but he had removed it at his own expense. But relatives complained that the coffin was too small and the body laid on bare wood with the feet sticking to the pitch. All there was to cover him was a piece of thin stuff which did not meet in the middle CWN 09 01 15

1910 05 20

Vagrants at Chesterton workhouse were kept for two nights, being given work according to their ability during the day and liberated at seven o'clock on the second morning. They had eight ounces of bread and water for breakfast and supper and eight ounces of bread and 1½ ounces of cheese for dinner. But is it fair to starve their poor wretches to this extent; not everyone is a rogue: many are just the failures of life and cannot help themselves, one Guardian said. 10 05 20

1911

Queens College sells one of its almshouses in Queens Lane to Kings College & demolishes rest [1.20]

1911 01 06

Legislative changes have removed the pauper disqualification in connection with the Old Age Pensions Act. At Cambridge workhouse 22 men and 16 women were eligible for the pension but only three have declared their intention of leaving the House. All three are men between 70 and 75 years of age who are going to live with relatives. At Chesterton Workhouse 48 inmates are entitled to the pension but again only three are leaving, one being over 80. Another old man has not yet made up his mind. Perhaps the coming of more genial weather will bring him to a decision to accept his pension and forsake the shelter of the House. 11 01 06f

1911 04 28

An Inspector's report on Cambridge Workhouse criticised arrangements in the sick ward, the dietary, bathing arrangements and care of children. The sick ward contained 25 male and 28 females with only one partially trained nurse and a woman who came in to sit up at night. The majority of the bed-ridden cases were helpless and a great deal of the actual nursing was done by paupers. There were no modern conveniences and the female side top floor had only a drinking water tap fixed over a basin. A new midwifery ward had been erected with no sink or hot and cold water 11 04 28e

1911 08 25

Night in Cambridge Casual Ward (see Memories 5 Sep 2011). – 11 08 25d & e

1911 09 29

The proposed way-ticket system would mean a casual who was really tramping for work would present his ticket at the workhouse manager on arrival and have his bath, his supper and bed in the ordinary way. Then in the morning he would be allowed to go on his way without doing any work. The manager would direct him to a place where he could, by showing the ticket, obtain bread and cheese for one meal. He would not need to beg. But 30 per cent of tramps were liars and wherever there was a 'soft place' it was smothered with vagrants, a Cambridge conference was told. 11 09 29 c d e

1911 09 30

Slum demolition means poor people have nowhere to live except workhouse [2.24]

1911 09 30

Conference on tramps - habitual work-shy keep clear of 'hard' Unions & honour 'soft' [2.25]

1911 12 22

During the week 274 persons have been supplied by the Mayor's soup kitchen and 73 gallons of soup, nine lbs of dripping and six stone of bread have been distributed. Meat, bones etc have been received from Mr W. Robinson of Bene't Street and other butchers, while G.H. French of East Road has given pea flour and Mr Wallis of Haslingfield, swedes. The sale of bone has realised one shilling and tenpence. The mayor has promised to distribute oranges today and Mrs Prior, Furniss Lodge, has kindly promised 150 mince pies. 11 12 22a

1912 03 01

The way-ticket system: a tramp's impression – 12 03 01b

1912 03 22

Tramps were worthless idle people who did not want to work. They should be taken and dumped into the sea – but this would poison the fishes. Last weekend there were 172 of them in Cambridge. The majority of the men slept together in one common room and loved to be together. If they were separated the number of vagrants would decrease because tramps had a system of signs and would warn others 'That's a bad place, don't go there', a conference was told. 12 03 22a & b

1912 03 29

Luke Hosegood is retiring from Cambridge Workhouse after 42 years, 36 as Master. During his long service he has made it a model institution as far as the limitation of the old-fashioned building will allow. He first came as school-master when 19-years old and married the schoolmistress, a girl from Bourn. When a vacancy for Master and Matron occurred in 1876 the Guardians, without advertising, selected them. Their daughter is assistant matron and their son honorary organist. Luke was awarded the 'Victoria Cross of Civil Life' for rescuing inmates from a fire in 1883. 12 03 29

1912 05 24

Harry Payne, 'the literary tramp' says that Cambridge is one of the best towns in Britain for 'needies' (travellers). "The 'beaks' are our best 'pals'. When we are 'pinched' for 'gagging' (begging) we ought to get seven days. The 'rozzers' will snap us up but might as well spare their 'trilbies'. Magistrates understand us, they do. They know what we require. No seven, 14 or 21 days 'hard', not even a reprimand. Just a polite request that we leave town within 12 hours. We do not contrive to get 'pinched' until we have 'worked' the town to a standstill and it is no hardship to get on to another 'uhie'" 12 05 24c

1912 07 12

Chesterton workhouse has been criticised by a lady inspector. The nursing staff was totally inadequate at the time of her visit with a solitary nurse on duty in the sick wards doing the work of three. Another complaint was that the young children were relegated to the care of incapables or undesirables. The lady visitor may be somewhat faddy but there must be some foundation for her strictures. 12 07 12d

1912 07 19

The National Insurance Act has seen a great rush of insurable people to join approved societies and applications for cards have reached stupendous figures. Cambridge General Benefit Society was one of the first to be approved and have admitted 100 new members. To their disgust members of the Cambridge Police Force have been called on to contribute their fourpence a week under the Act. This is difficult to understand as they get almost full pay during sickness and receive free medical attendance from the Police Surgeons 12 07 19f & g

1912 09 13

Luke Hosegood had been Master of Cambridge Workhouse since 1876 and was most assiduous in his duties; inspectors had commented favourably on the improvements he'd made. No fault had been found with his work and although he was some 60 years of age, he had a good ten years in him yet. There was not a gentleman's house in Cambridge which was cleaner and better kept and regulated than the Workhouse. But he had submitted his resignation, Guardians were told 12 09 13a & b

1912 10 04

Queens' College new building stands on the site of a row of almshouses founded by the first President of the college, Andrew Dokett. Architecturally they were of no value and their removal can scarcely be regretted. His charitable bequest will be continued as weekly pensions. Planned on traditional lines forming three sides of a court with the main façade to Queens' Lane, they provide accommodation for 26 undergraduates as well as the Bursar's rooms, guest room and clerks' offices. They were built by Rattee and Kett in a remarkably short time for such first-class work. 12 10 04h

1912 10 04

Chelmsford Board of Guardians passed a resolution in favour of the bodies of paupers who die in the Workhouse and are not claimed by relatives being sent to the University Medical School, Cambridge, for experimental purposes. One Guardian described the proposal as a scandal, but others, including two clergymen, said they would be willing to allow their own bodies to be used for a similar purpose. 12 10 04j

1912 10 11

An Ely Diocesan report on housing conditions says that the greatest sufferers are the mothers of families. The fathers go out all the day to work, the children are in school but the women are anchored in the house. The combined effect of insufficient space, bad sanitation, poor water supply and air deprived of oxygen produces a kind of torpor which disinclines her to any exertion and she cannot control high-spirited children who seek amusement in the streets. Many women allow their homes to remain dirty but an untidy house drives the husband to the tavern where he spends the money which might make the house more comfortable 12 10 11b & c

1912 12 06

The Cambridge Home of Mercy (Female Refuge) afforded women who have been following a sinful court of life a home where they may be usefully employed and instructed in religion. The Mission House on Newmarket Road provided temporary shelter for girls and women while inquiries were made, then placed them in homes and situations. It was unfortunate that men led women astray and women led men astray and the blame must be borne by both. The girls were grateful to be rescued; one who had led a notorious and openly evil life had married and now leads a respectable life 12 12 06e

1913 02 28

Workhouse – Hosegood offers resignation, daughter clerk controversy 13 02 28 p7 CIP

1913 04 25

Mrs Emma Hosegood was Matron of workhouse, for 36 years. As Miss Porter she started as schoolmistress at Caxton workhouse before moving to Cambridge where Luke Hosegood was schoolmaster. They married and were offered the posts of Master and Matron at Mill Road. All her

life was devoted to her work, striving to improve and maintain the high standard of efficiency she set up. 13 04 25 p10 CIP

1913 06 20

Workhouse master Luke Hosegood retirement & p7 13 06 20 p6 CIP

1913 07 04

Workhouse new master, G. Foden 13 07 04 p7 CIP

1913 10 03

Luke Hosegood was at Cambridge workhouse for 42 years, most as manager. When appointed the Union ad not been attended to and he set to work most energetically to get it into perfect condition, making it home-like. There were many poor old people and it was the Guardians' wish that they should be treated with the greatest kindness and their somewhat grey lives made brighter. The Master was a disciplinarian and quelled the most turbulent inmate without undue severity. When his wife, the Matron, died, he resigned, even though not at a pensionable age. They hoped he would find something to supplement his pension. 13 10 03 p6 & 9 CIP

1914

Waters almshouses, Seymour Street, founded (Mrs Waters dies Feb 1915) [2.16, 4.10]

1914 02

Poor Law Union representatives meet to discuss tramp problem [1.8]

1914 07 02

Cambridge Workhouse needed a new boiler and pipes for the kitchen. There were serious structural defects. The cooking arrangements were antiquated, the stove out of repair, and the boiler liable to burst at any moment. The smell of cooking and heat from the kitchen made the Master's room most unpleasant. Greasy water overflowed on to the floor, the drain grease trap had partially rotted away. A large boiler in a shed supplied the hot water for cleaning the House and was a meeting place for all the male and female cleaners. The laundry had insufficient space and had no labour saving contrivances 14 07 02 14 07 17 p3

1914 07 17

The parishes of St Philip and St Barnabas have been enriched by the gift of six new almshouses which Mrs Waters has recently endowed and built on her land in Seymour Street, Vinery Road. They are intended for old age pensions of 70 upwards; three will be occupied by old ladies from each parish. They are of good quality red brick with a living room, bedroom and scullery fitted with a sink. The coal hole and lavatory adjoin the scullery. Mrs Waters selected the first tenants. 14 07 17 p5

1914 10 23

New workhouse opposed 14 10 23

1915 02 26

Cambridge Guardians discussed the appointment of a foster-mother for the Children's Home which would be apart from the Workhouse. At present the Matron did not have time to supervise them. Bread, meat, groceries and cleaning materials would be obtained from the contractors and firewood from the Workhouse. But Mr Coulson claimed the committee had deliberately underestimated the costs; the report was the most misleading one ever sent out. They now had the expense of two Houses instead of one 15 02 26

1916 02 16

Soldiers in the Workhouse. A report by Cambridge Board of Guardians states that three soldiers recently discharged, from the Army had been admitted to the casual ward within the previous

fortnight. It is a lamentable thing that the Workhouse should become the abode of so many old soldiers towards the close of their lives. We shall be ingrates indeed if we let the men who have engaged in this great war for world liberty end their days as paupers, if any effort of the community can save them from that fate

1916 03 15

Florence Ada Keynes, founded Charity Organisation Society – profile – 15 03 15a

1917 06

Communal kitchens opened Church Street [3.4]

1918 08 14

Inmate of Chesterton Workhouse objected to stone-breaking in time of war and damaging the bolts of his door and a lock on a cupboard. Sentenced to seven days' hard labour on the first charge and 14 days' hard labour on the second 18 08 14 CIPof

1918 12

National kitchen opened Mill Road [3.5]

1919

King's college nominate last almswomen (last payment 1928) [1.19]

1919 05 19

Save the Children fund started in Cambridge by Eglantyne Jebb 19 May 1919 øCEN 5.5.89

1920

1920 02 25

Cambridge Shelter for Girls established 1851 by undergraduates and occupied building in Church St; had workshop in Newmarket Road till temporarily closed in 1918 because of lack of a worker. Re-opened 1918 as first-aid station for women in distress; needs support – Ch 20 02 25a

1920 06 02

Woollard family not to be evicted from Sturton Street home, follows meeting on Parkers Piece to consider treatment of soldiers and sailors who had come back disabled and with nothing to fall back on. A cordon of people should stand round the house and prevent the planned eviction said Stubbs - CDN 20 06 02

1920 07 17

Y.W.C.A. Hostel moves from Barton Road to Chesterton Road overlooking the river - CDN 20 07 17

1921c

Ely Diocesan Unmarried Mother & baby home opened [5.4]

1921 03 19

Ministry of Health condemns Cambridge workhouse, will be closed art first opportunity [6.3]

1921 04 09

Cambridge Home for waifs & strays closed last year & land procured for new home at cost £10,000 [6.4]

1922 01 14

Unemployed committee open soup kitchen Barnwell Theatre [3.12]

1922 05 27

Among the charitable institutions of Cambridge is the Cottage Home for Little Orphan Girls in Fitzwilliam-road. Its work has been carried on so quietly and unassumingly that the majority of townspeople are probably unaware of its existence. More than fifty years ago two wealthy Cambridge undergraduates were so distressed at the sight of many poor and neglected children in the town that they gave a certain sum of money for the founding of a home for orphan girls. Girls are admitted between the ages of four and twelve and are trained for domestic service and I am assured that those who have passed through the Home had done exceedingly well 22 05 27

1922 12 13

A satisfactory state of affairs was reported at the annual meeting of the Cambridge Home of Mercy. During the year the Home had been full. 16 girls were admitted, 12 were sent out to service and outfits were provided. One was sent to a stricter home, one to a sanatorium and two to be certified as mentally defective. Four girls had been married. Letters from old girls in service showed that many are doing remarkably well 22 12 13

1923 11 21

Miss Alderson said that since the opening of the Cambridge shelter for girls house in 1922 there had been 91 admissions. The present house (13 Hertford Street) was absolutely inadequate. There was a lack of proper arrangements for cleansing, no possibility for a separate bedroom for those for whom it was urgently necessary, no place except the one sitting room where the washing could be dried and the absence of any pretence of a waiting room. She described the only lines on which such a house could be run as Early Victorian if not prehistoric and appealed for support from the municipal authorities 23 11 21

1923 12 06

The question of providing additional accommodation at Cambridge workhouse was considered. The committee had inspected the sanatorium of the Leys school in Hooper Street which was for sale. It appeared to be suitable for a nurses' home. Mr Hall said they ought to leave some of the patients at Chesterton. Some of them had been in the institution for 10 or 12 years and it would be better to leave them there to spend the evening of their life, where they knew almost everyone 23 12 06

1924 06 16

Many in Cambridge associated with Poor Law work will regret the death of Mr Luke Hosegood, who for 37 years was master of the workhouse in Mill Road. He was appointed schoolmaster in 1870 when there were 150 children at the Workhouse, and when tuition had to be provided for them there. In April 1883 a serious fire occurred in the men's infirmary. His brave conduct and self-possession was the means of preventing any loss of life. In recognition of his prompt work and meritorious conduct in rescuing some of the inmates he was presented with a testimonial 24 06 16 [1.9]

1925 05 29

Cambridge Guardians were told that their forefathers built the present infirmary as a test house for the able-bodied, but now it was becoming half hospital and half almshouse, and so they needed better accommodation now than they did. Mr Sells said he had every sympathy with the poor but they had to recognise that their inmates were better housed, better fed and better clothed than 75 per cent of the poor of Cambridge. If expenditure was embarked upon it would have to be found by the working men of Cambridge. The new building was not urgently needed 25 05 29

1925 06 08

The Bishop of Ely formally opened Stanton House, the new Cambridge Shelter for Women and Girls at Glisson Road. The Home is open day and night, not only for what are generally known as "rescue cases" but for all those who find themselves stranded in the town without means of getting lodgings. Many cases are brought by the police. The inmates stay until they can be restored to their friends or arranged for in suitable institutions. Originally started in 1854 by a few undergraduates it has several times been temporarily closed down on account of financial difficulties and as often re-opened at the request of town authorities 25 06 08

1927 10

Overseers of the Poor make their last rate; after 300 years their duties of valuation of properties & collection of rates to be taken over by Committee [1.10]

1925 10 02

The new Harvey Goodwin Home for Boys which has been erected at St Luke's Park, Victoria Road, Cambridge under the auspices of the Church of England Society for Providing Homes for Children (Waifs and Strays) was formally opened. The house is a fine, red brick building, capable of housing 35 boys and stands on a splendid site, and within its own grounds. The Bishop of Ely spoke of the work of sending boys from these homes to the Dominions under proper supervision 25 10 02

1926 10 27

An important new block is about to be opened as an extension of the Cambridge Poor Law Institution. The Mill Road workhouse received its first inmates in September 1838; just before Christmas married couples and the aged women arrived, and the sick and infirm were brought 'in fives' from the Poor-house of St Sepulchre and St Mary-the-Less. As tea was then 3s.3d. a lb 'small beer' was allowed in its place and sometimes given in excess so the quantity was limited to one quart daily per inmate. It has served with certain alterations and additions for three generations but now is inadequate for present requirements. The new block contains sick wards, maternity wards and nurseries. It will prove very useful and be a credit to the town 26 10 27

1927 03 10

An inquest was told how an 82 years old lady, who had fallen, was moved about from one institution to another until she had, against her relative's inclination, to find a last refuge in the Cambridge Workhouse Infirmary. Addenbrooke's Hospital had said she was noisy and disturbing the rest of the ward and could not be detained. She was sent to the Infirmary from which she was removed to the Devonshire Nursing Home by her relatives. But they said that whenever she moved she cried out very loudly on account of the pain and was too noisy to keep. So she was returned to the Infirmary where they diagnosed a broken rib. 27 03 10

1927 04 02

The Overseers of Cambridge have come to an official end & the passing of this ancient institution was celebrated at the Dorothy Café. It used to be their duty to help any poor person by granting relief without asking any questions, to be called in cases of suicide and take charge of mental cases. When they rated houses it was remarkable the very small value owners placed upon their own property. They sometimes felt it would not have been a bad thing if they could have bought the house at the price just stated by the owner. (Laughter). They had been in existence about 300 years they were handing over their duties to a Borough going back 700 years. 27 04 02 [1.11]

1927 09 01

The foundation stone of two new cottages were laid at the Cambridge Victoria Friendly Society's Institution in Victoria Road, Cambridge when. One is to house the nurse-matron and the other will be for an extra inmate. They have been made possibly by the generosity of the late Miss Emily Flack. They will be one-storey buildings containing a living room, a bedroom and a scullery. The nurse's cottage will have a bathroom in addition. It was only right that old people who had worked all their life and exercised thrift by belonging to a Friendly Society should in their old age find a haven of rest, said the President, Dr E.H. Parker. 27 09 01

1927 09 10

Vagrancy has increased greatly since War, dilemma over casuals -117 housed one night in premises suitable for 60, Chesterton Overseers refuse help [1.16]

1927 11 03

A catastrophe was narrowly averted at Cambridge workhouse when the boiler “sprung a leak”. Had the trouble not been promptly detected an explosion would have inevitably occurred. This was the second occasion during the week and it had only to be incapacitated for the laundry, heating and cooking to be at a standstill. The trouble was caused by an accumulation of chalk deposit from the water. It would not have occurred had the apparatus been cleaned out at regular intervals. The sooner they got rid of the boiler and chimney the better. 27 11 03

1927 12 13

The Home of Mercy in Christchurch Street, Cambridge continues to do valuable work for girls in need, both in material matters and spiritually. It is almost always full & parents of the inmates express their gratitude for the care in training the girls. Eighteen have been admitted during the past year and eight have been provided with outfits, earned by good conduct marks, and placed out in service. Four have been certified under the Mental Deficiency Act, two returned to their friends, one refused to stay and one died of meningitis. Several have been baptised, confirmed and admitted to Holy Communion; some had to be taught even the Lord’s Prayer and many are admitted in a low condition of mental and bodily health. 27 12 13

1928 01 10 c

A meeting was held to consider collaboration between the Cambridge and Chesterton Unions in the alleviation of the tramp problem. For some reason very few tramps go to Chesterton but very many go to Cambridge which is very seriously overcrowded. The indoor poor of the two unions should be managed by one committee who would gather together all the sick, all the babies, all the children and all the tramps and distribute them between the two existing union houses as seemed most convenient. 28 01 20 [1.12]

1928 07 12

Sir – everyone associates Cambridge with a stream of young life spending the happiest and most fruitful years of their youth. But at the same time another stream of men is seeking in Cambridge some ‘odd jobs’, something to provide a few coppers. And does the crowd of the ‘upper ten’ realise the conditions under which their unfortunate brothers spend their nights? In the casual ward at the workhouse inmates are unable to get to sleep owing to the room swarming with mice, which scamper up and down the floor and run over the men on the beds. Surely the authorities could cleanse the room and eject the army of mice. How can such a condition of things exist in a ‘seat of learning’ where the laws of health are studied – Mary Higgs 28 07 12

1928 09 05

Cambridgeshire gets its quote of “Weary Willies” – the wandering fraternity and ne’er-do-wells – who, homeless and penniless, are content to patronise the various casual wards or ‘spikes’ and seek shelter at the expense of the ratepayers. I recall a visit to Cambridge ‘spike’ when bread and water was all we received in the way of sustenance and a stiff task of wood sawing or stone-breaking was expected in return. The ‘spike’ at Ely was, however, always regarded as a ‘cushy’ one. Today the tramp has a comfortable mattress to rest on, a hot bath, clean towels, night-shirt and sometimes a safety razor. On leaving he is provided with bread and cheese to sustain him on his journey. 28 09 05

1928 09 05

All applicants for admission to Cambridge workhouse are searched for contraband goods – not a pleasant task for the porter, and anathema to the tramp, who endeavours by all the tricks in his calendar to outwit the searching fingers of the official. No tramp is supposed to take in any tobacco, pipe, matches or money but to place them in his kit which is returned on discharge. But “Weary Willie” dearly loves a smoke; his stumpy pipe he will conceal in a toe of one of his big boots, in the other he places his matches or a selection of ‘kerbstone mixture’ – cigarette ends picked up in the streets - and Cambridge in Term provides him with a plentiful harvest. 28 09 05

1928 10 18

Cambridge Guardians have sanctioned the provision of a cinematograph at the Poor Law Institution. A Kodascope machine will be installed and a subscription raised to cover the cost of £1 a week. The provision of music on cinematograph or wireless was just as much part of the Institution as providing medical and dental treatment. They also considered the installation of a system of telephones 28 10 18

1929

New Casual ward built at Chesterton, most up-to-date in country with spring mattresses, baths; after 10 years generally accepted that not meeting with any success & casuals just using wards as hotels; men refused work that was available & Government decided to close down the wards 'after 10 years' [12]

1929 02 21

Cambridge Guardians debated purchasing number 137 Gwydir Street for the few children in the Workhouse. Mr Francis said they should not build on that side; there were complaints of the smoke and grime and he could not imagine a much worse place. The right place was at Chesterton where they would at least get the air and the sun. Mr Lofts said they could not afford to expend that amount of money, while they could board children an extension was unnecessary. There was no rule against boarding out children under three but they tried to keep babies with their mothers 29 02 21

1929 07 31

The Rev Frank Jennings is getting first-hand experience of our social problems and spent his holiday living the life of a tramp. Two tramps described the Casual ward of Cambridge workhouse: "Rotten, sire. The 'spike' there is 'no cop'. Swarms of mice run about at night. No baths, dirty wash basins. It's a disgrace to the city". So he visited for himself; the usual questions were asked by the porter but there was no attempt at searching. "I was directed to a large sleeping-room and bidden fetch my ration of 8ozs of bread and marg and a mug of hot but unsweetened tea. There was no bath, contrary to Government regulations as the boilers were due to be inspected. There were 18 people in the room and wire-framed beds replete with three Army rugs made a comfortable lie down. There were no mice but I noticed a few holes in the floor", 29 07 31 p6

1929 10 16

Sir – a young one-legged tramp was struggling into town on his crutches when he was asked by a Universityman where he was bound. "Cambridge workhouse", he replied whereupon the Varsityman at once called a taxi and accompanied him there. Having rung the bell for ten minutes and received no reply the student scaled the 10-foot spiked railing, took the gate key from the porter's lodge, opened the entrance gates and led the tramp into the lodge where he seated him in a comfortable chair and was driven away. One can imagine the surprise of the night porter arriving some minutes afterwards – C.F. Lewis CDN 16.10.1929

1930

1930 03

Cambridge Board of Guardians funeral feast held at Lion Hotel, [1.13]

1930 03 21

At the last meeting of the Newmarket Board of Guardians important features of their 94-year history were recalled. Originally there were nine workhouses but a central workhouse opened with the removal of the inmates of the Soham workhouse in 1837. It was enlarged and rebuilt in 1902. Whatever else was said of the present Poor Law System which was now passing away, no one could ever say that it was not humane. They had to deal with men and women with whom life had dealt hardly and in no sphere of public service had such a demand for wise judgement and sympathetic action been more forthcoming 30 03 21 a & b

1930 04

Chesterton Board ceases after 96 years [1.14]

1930 04 01

The disappearance of Boards of Guardians and the transference of the Poor Law work to the Public Assistance Committees has caused some bewilderment. The chief institution in Cambridge is that at 81a Mill Road; it was erected in 1838 as a 'Union' to replace numerous small parish workhouses. The name has been changed to Poor Law Institution in recent years. The demand for accommodation became so acute that in 1923 they had to build a new block. The Infirmary of the old Workhouse has become a hospital with 124 beds in up-to-date wards with a large nursing staff including three certified midwives. 30 04 01a-c

1930 06

First meeting of Council Public Assistance Committee attack Cambridge Guardians' "utter foolishness in being so generous in many relief cases [1.15]

1930 08 20

Cambridge is well known to 'Weary Willies' – tramps – as 'hard-up-town' owing to the quantity of cigarette ends which can be culled from its pavements, especially during Term; 'hard-up' being the name they give to the tobacco gathered from the streets. A few years ago vagrants found meagre fare in the casual wards: bread and water for supper and breakfast with a scanty bread and cheese dinner. Today the diet includes bread and margarine with tea or cocoa for supper & a dinner of cheese, bread, margarine and vegetables 30 08 20a-b

1930 12 08

The Home of Mercy in Christchurch Street, Cambridge has been more or less full of girls, almost all aged between 16 and 20. Seventeen girls had been admitted and ten provided with outfits and placed in domestic service. Five have been baptised, six confirmed and three restored to Holy Communion while two girls formerly in the home have been well married. The chapel had been redecorated and beautified. There were fewer illegitimate births but the moral standard of the country had broken down and a very large number of outwardly respectable women were morally corrupt. 30 12 08a-c

1931 05 08

Why do tramps prefer Cambridge? Councillor Edwards had given lifts to men on the road from London. They told him that its casual wards offer a great measure of comfort to the gentlemen of the road and it is a convenient jumping-off ground for tramps en route to Newmarket races. "If we carry on as we are, we shall get casuals and plenty of them", he told councillors who were considering a scheme to build new accommodation for 150 casuals at Union Lane. They agreed to reduce the size of the building. 31 05 08c

1932 01 25

The 'White Ribbon' Coffee House and Temperance Hotel in East Road has been taken over by the Salvation Army. After redecorating it will be run as a hostel and restaurant providing good refreshment and lodgings for 40 men at a reasonable charge. 32 01 25

1932 04 15

Tramps are on the increase. Previously the 'weary willies' were habitual vagrants who did no work; bearded, unclean and ragged they 'humped' their dirty kits through rain and sunshine. But now many respectable and well-dressed men who have been shorn of the dole by the Unemployment Insurance Act are taking to 'the road' in the almost vain hope of obtaining some employment. There are some from high professions who have found themselves cast on the 'rubbish heap', while married men are leaving their families rather than be a burden to wives who are employed. 32 04 15 & a

1932 06 01

Men's Casual Ward opens, Union Lane; Mill Road wards close [1.1]

1932 09 30

Members of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement organised a meeting opposite a house in New Street, Cambridge in the interests of a resident who was threatened with eviction. The man was a rag and bone dealer with two children whose application for relief from the Public Assistance Committee had been refused on the grounds that he was not starving. A Defence Committee was formed to oppose his ejection and a demonstration will be arranged on Parker's Piece 32 09 30bb (picture 32 09 30d)

1933 11 28

Cambridge Victoria Friendly Society's Institution opened its new pavilion with a verandah from which residents could watch Cambridge Town Football Club's matches. It had started in hired cottages in James Street but in 1841 the foundation stone for the present building was laid. Cottages were added in 1888 and 1899 thanks to the Jubilee fund with the four others known as Miller's Buildings opened in 1906. It provides accommodation for 37 residents whose average age is 70 years. 33 11 28

1934 09 24

The Cottage Home for Orphan Girls is a small house in Fitzwilliam Road, a part of Cambridge which is not generally seen by the population. Few people were aware of its existence. It seemed there were not many destitute children in Cambridge for the local cases were not numerous but it was open to orphans from anywhere. It was started by two undergraduates named Coote and Watney and the foundation stone had been laid in June 1871. 34 09 24

1935 04 17

In a little cottage in Union Lane, Chesterton, men on the way to the Institution can now, for a few hours daily, experience something of the comfort of home life. The once rather dilapidated house has been transformed into a cosy Wayfarers' rest. Brightly-distempered walls and a roaring fire make it a comfortable place. On arrival they are given tea and a cigarette. Upstairs is a tiny chapel where prayers are said with a bible reading for any who care to attend. 35 04 17

1935 05 13

The number employed by the Disabled Persons Workshop has varied from 9 to 10; two are doing piece work in their homes, not being able to attend at the shop. Unfortunately three who are employed are not eligible for the deficiency grants from the Ministry of Labour which has hit the income. It has been a disturbed year owing to the difficulty of finding suitable premises in Cambridge for a shop. The workshops in Gloucester Street are out of the way and they had to leave Peas Hill because of demolitions, meaning there was nowhere to sell their goods. The new premises in Trumpington Street are outside the shopping centre and the rents and rates are a strain – 35 05 13

1935 12 17

Thirteen girls have left the Home of Mercy in Christchurch Street during the year, nine of whom were placed out in service. Every effort has been made to train them in laundry and housework, cooking and needlework. The Fellowship of Compassion has provided the girls with woollen underwear and rubber aprons. Religious teaching, which was more necessary than ever, has continued and there are always girls in various states of preparation for baptism and confirmation. 35 12 17

1936 04 25

The Wayfarers' Rest at 3 Union Lane, Chesterton has been open for a year. It provides an opportunity for those on their way to the Casual Ward to spend an hour or two in homely surroundings during which they are given tea, scones and a cigarette or tobacco. They can write letters, read magazines and join in the small chapel for prayers and a short Bible reading. More than 4,700 men and 120 woman have used it so far 36 04 25a [1.5]

1937

Victoria Friendly Society build six new dwellings [2.3]

1937 07 22

The Home of Mercy in Christchurch Street is one of the oldest Rescue and Preventive Homes in the country. Miss Meeking, who completed 29 years as manager, had a remarkable understanding of the young girls; many sent to her as 'hopeless cases' were restored to self-respect and received a fresh start in life. In the Home she was affectionately known as 'Mam', but there was no weak sentimentality in her treatment of the girls and she fully understood the need of firmness and discipline. She knew that when they left the shelter of the Home they would meet many difficulties and kept in touch with scores of girls. She was consulted frequently by other moral welfare workers and recognised as a wide and sympathetic counsellor. 37 07 22a

1937 12 24

Fellowship House toy distribution, which has taken place about Christmas-time for the last five years, came to an end after a very strenuous week. Altogether nearly 1,300 bags were distributed to the children of all unemployment men whose addresses were obtained from the Employment Exchange. Each bag contained an old toy, a new toy, a book, orange and bag of sweets and were delivered by private cars. Then as a 'Grand Finale' some 1,400 children were given a free film entertainment at the Victoria Cinema. 37 12 24

1938 01 08

Two wayfarers of the Public Assistance Institution, Union Lane were summoned that, being persons habitually wandering from place to place, they took a five-year-old child with them, thus preventing it receiving elementary education. They admitted they had no fixed abode and the boy only attended school for a few weeks at Long Sutton. The small solemn-faced lad was led into the court and lifted on to one of the benches for the magistrates to see him. He was well-nourished and well looked-after. He had never been neglected. The boy was taken into care though the father could see him once a month. 38 01 08

1938 11 28

Something should be done about the housing of old people: the number of old people is growing out of all proportion to the number of children and people of working age, Cambridge Women's Luncheon Club was told. In the old days people with nobody to look after them had to go to an institution. Now most live with relations but are not wanted, cause overcrowding, are treated as unpaid nurses and servants and appreciated very little. Some live in attic rooms in other people's houses with no water or cooking arrangements. It would be better to convert middle-class houses for them where they could form some sort of community. 38 11 28b

1938 12 10

The Home of Mercy dates back to 1836 when residents concerned about the lack of provision for women, hired Dover House in East Road as a place of refuge. Then in 1838 the Cambridge Female Refuge opened in Christchurch Street in which girls who have fallen into evil ways can receive Christian guidance and discipline in a home-like atmosphere. Last year nine left to go into service and four were returned to their parents. One was baptised and three received Confirmation. 38 12 10b & c

1938 12 23

Cambridge Police Poor and Needy Fund ensures many needy families can enjoy a good Christmas dinner and plenty of coal. A large queue formed in Downing Place, young and old, they call carried baskets, jugs and sacks – even pillow slips. A huge pile of potatoes was in one corner and milk was handed out from churns together with butter, tea and cartons of peas. The Police Santa Claus No.1 (the Chief Constable) chatted with people as they came in. Then came a Distribution Day lunch of roast beef and Christmas pudding in the police station. 38 12 23

1939 04 21

The Victoria Friendly Institution was inaugurated at a meeting at the Wrestlers Inn, Petty Cury in 1837 and the foundation stone of the old building laid in 1841. A programme and a number of coins were also placed in a bottle. But there is no trace of them. Now six houses have been erected to mark

their centenary, providing happiness for those fortunate enough to be elected tenants. It was a great satisfaction to know there were such places in which people could spend the eventide of life 39 04 21

1940

1943

Bene't Hostel for stranded girls - women caught at railway station when trains did not run etc - set up in Brooklands Ave (moved Drosier Rd 1945, closed 1966) [5.1]

1946 10

Edwinstowe old peoples home opened Oct [446.10.3]

1947 06 16

"There is a general feeling throughout every grade of society that we want to have a brighter old age - and this is one of the first steps taken towards it". This comment was made by Alderman W.L. Briggs when he opened the first Old People's Welfare Club in the Tracy Memorial Hall, Romsey Town, Cambridge. This club is the first of its kind in the town, and more will be opened. "This new movement throughout the county was to take an interest in people who had reached the sensible years of life". Remarking that as far as pensions were concerned things were getting better every day - and it should be. "After all, we are the people who have borne the heat and burden of the day and have made England what she is" 47 06 16

1948 05 05

The experience of being stranded in a strange town, with nowhere to stay, is particularly unpleasant for young women. There must be many who, stranded in this way in Cambridge, have heard themselves being directed to the Bene't Hostel for Women which exists to provide such shelter. The hostel was started in Brooklands Avenue in 1943 to meet a wartime need and during the last year of hostilities 1,060 applications were received and the total number occupying beds was 8,265. Its continuing need being proved, a house was later bought at 1, Drosier Road where an average of 21 beds have been occupied nightly ever since 48 05 05

1948 07 02

What might be termed the swan-Song of the Cambridge County Council Public assistance Committee took place at Shire Hall. In common with many other similar committees its duties will be taken over by the Ministry of Health on 5th July. The chairman, Mrs Mellish Clark, said that at the County Hospital Mill Road they decided to develop the maternity work, to close the casual wards and move the nursery children out to Linton. At Chesterton Hospital they had built a new casual ward, but when the war came these wards were converted by the additional of hospital beds and were being so used at the present time. At Linton they had built a Nurses Home but as there was no proper sanitation at Caxton they had decided to pull it down 48 07 02

1948 08 25

The need for utilising Chesterton hospital for the elderly and infirm people of Cambridgeshire and of housing casals in some other part of the county was discussed at a meeting of the Board of Governors of the United Cambridge Hospitals. Dr R. Ellis said "There is a tremendous need, with the closing of infirmaries, to know what to do with the people who were housed in such places. A great hardship is being imposed on people who are old - they are literally living in houses in some villages in semi-starvation and dirt. There is no hope for them living in the way they are". Mr Dennard thought that as far as casals are concerned they should get a hut at Bourn and house them there 48 08 25

1950

1950

Members of the employment committee visited Trumpington Industrial Hostel and commented on the satisfactory manner in which the camp had been converted into reasonable accommodation. There

were dining rooms, dormitories to accommodate about six men each, a theatre, laundry and ironing facilities and good reception arrangements. Although the premises were not ideal they thought the hostel was remarkable satisfactory and very useful c50 01 14

1952

Dr Barnardo's children's home opens [5.5]

1952 07 14

When the British Red Cross Society decided to make "Edwinstowe" at Chaucer Road, Cambridge a home for old people, there were questions in the minds of the organisers. Although residents would be well looked after and have all the material comforts, would the old people want to come? It is now an established and happy home and the public flock each year to the annual fete, not only to help the funds of the home but to renew acquaintance with the residents who seem to be having an "at home" in their own beautiful gardens. Pupils of the Betty Ripley-Carter School of Dancing made a charming contribution to the enjoyment with a dancing display.

1953 01 21

The Deputy Mayor of Cambridge, (Ald. H.O. Langdon) told a public meeting to launch an appeal for funds for a residential home for old people that it was a challenge to every one of them. "Can we stand aside and see old people who have spent a useful life in the service of our country suffer the pangs of loneliness and hardship, and let them die in despair, uncared for and unwanted", he asked. It is proposed to provide bed sitting rooms, both single and double, centrally heated and with modern amenities together with a dining room, reading and writing rooms where people can spend their declining years in the company of others and be tended and cared for.

1955 07 05

The Mayor cut the first sod for the building of the Cambridge Residential Home for Old People to be known as 'Langdon House'. It will take 37 residents with special provision for elderly married couples. Each will have a bed-sitting room with running water and they will share dining and sitting rooms. It will cost them £4.10s a week, but inability to meet this charge will not debar worthy residents from being admitted as it will be open to all without distinction. 55 07 05a

1956

Honey Hill old people's homes opened [3.7]

1956 08 16

The pink-overalled corps of women known as the 'Home Helps Service' are available to homes where there are expectant mothers, elderly people, those who are ill and small children in need of care. The 250 ladies cook, clean, shop, wash and iron, receiving 2s 10d an hour. One helper isn't exactly a housewifery expert but was always in some small trouble of her own. 'We like having her', the old people said, 'she brings us a bit of excitement!' 56 08 16

1956 12 28

Hilda Paine is leaving the Cambridgeshire Home Help Service. It started in 1948 when she was appointed to organise the service in the rural area and later took over the small Cambridge service which had been run by the W.V.S. and combined the two. From small beginnings the service is now a flourishing and important concern. There are now 275 home helps with a 'case load' of about 590 people a week 56 12 28

1957 08 01

Two groups of Cambridge people, one small and ageing, the other large and young will always carry vivid and happy memories of Princess Margaret's visit. One are the happy band who are passing away their 'twilight years' in the comfort and beauty of Langdon House, which she officially opened. The other are the young families who live on the new housing estate at Arbury Road where the foundation

stone of a new church was laid. The Princess came into their midst, laughing, joking and chatting with them, radiating her charm and personality wherever she went. 57 08 01c & d & e & f

1957 09 18

I had always thought of old peoples' homes being sad places where equally sad old people spend the end of their life. But Primrose Croft stands in a lovely garden filled with flowers backing onto school playing fields. Each of the 35 residents has an airy room with attractive curtains and a lock-up cupboard. The women were busy doing knitting and crocheting, the wireless in the lounge is also enjoyed and the matron hopes one day to afford a television set. 57 09 18

1957

Langdon House opened by Princess Margaret : after Alderman Langdon, 1952 Old People Welfare Council urged him as Mayor for home old people, pledged his personal help; Cambridge Housing Society would manage it if £10,000 by public subscription, foundation stone laid 1955, finished Dec 1956, for 36 able-bodied elderly; new wing 1963 for old who unable to move far & need constant attention [3.8, 15.1]

1958

Hill Top Club used by US forces, then over-60s, all-day club [15.3]

1958 02 18

Civic leaders have backed the News' appeal for emergency funds for Edwinstowe Old People's Home in Chaucer Road. It needs money to replace furnishings, including mattresses and the hot water system. This pioneer Home has catered for 90 elderly people since it opened in 1946 but rising costs have made it impossible for money to be found other than by an appeal to the warm-hearted generosity of local people. 58 02 18a

1959 03 16

Frederick Archibald Mace arrived as Master of Chesterton Hospital in 1946 and implemented the changes which have turned it into the bright, happy National Health Service establishment it is today. But to several old people, some of whom have been in the hospital from their childhood and until ten years ago knew it only as an institution, he was still 'the Master', but a Master who contradicted all the old Dickensian ideas of institutional life. 59 03 16

1959 06 01

The Cambridge Association for Social Welfare told how in 1854 a group of undergraduates opened a Mission in Church Street, later to be called Stanton House, where spiritual and material help was given to women and girls in serious moral trouble. Then in 1883 a group of University ladies formed the 'Cambridge Association for the Care of Girls' finding work for girls living under dangerous circumstances 58 06 01 & a

1959 09 12

Henrietta Street and St Eligius almshouses – 59 09 12c & d, 59 09 26, 59 09 28

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960 11 22

Stanton House flatlets old people, luxurious accommodation opened [3.9, 15.10]

1961 02 17

The Old People's Welfare Council believes the best thing for the elderly is for them to live independently as long as possible. But many cannot and there are an increasing number of people wanting care in their old age. The main problem is finding suitable premises to make into old people's homes. In 1948 the County Council had to do with Linton Hospital and a few beds at Chesterton Hospital. Since then they have been modernised and improved. After the war buildings were very

difficult to get because of competition from firms wanting office accommodation and the rising cost of land. The first new home was The Grove, Fordham in 1951, followed by Willingham House and in 1956 Primrose Croft was adapted to take 35 elderly residents. The future plans are to erect purpose-designed buildings 61 02 17b

1961 08 12

Chesterton Hospital has 166 beds for the elderly sick and 74 custodial beds for able-bodied elderly people with no homes of their own. After decades of neglect geriatric medicine has come into its own. The number of elderly people is the highest it has ever been while a declining birth-rate has diminished the number of children available to care for their parents. Now 25 per cent of Britain's elderly are left without children to look after them in their old age. But of these 95 per cent are living independent lives and a quarter make some contribution to society until the age of 75 61 08 12

1962

Central Aid Society changes rules after 80 years due Welfare State, set out to improve conditions people living in Cambridge; till 1915 called Charity Organisation Society [Misc.4.6]

1962 02 01

The changing face of old Cambridge will soon see further demolition. Already a number of houses have been pulled down in Shelley Row and four more are to follow including one boasting an elegant example of a Mansard roof. The building on the corner of Leeke Street and Newmarket Row, known as Mendicity House, formerly provided lodgings for beggars following the Napoleonic War. It was later purchased by the Industrial Dwellings Company, set up to improve the inadequate housing in the Barnwell area. It is now Harris' butcher shop. 62 02 01b & c

1962 10 06

Almshouses demolished, King Street [1.17]

1962 12 04

Whitelocks Yard, Trumpington is a quiet oasis from traffic thundering by on the main road. Now the twelve 100-year-old houses are being put up for sale by the trustees of the charity of George Whitelock who say they need considerable improvements and a lot of money spending on them. But the elderly tenants are concerned for the future, fearing they may be thrown out on the streets. The homes, with a half-acre site, are being sold for £4,750 (about £83,360 now) 62 12 04a

1962 12 08

Collections at the Round Table's Christmas tree in St Andrew the Great churchyard began in 1953. Last year they raised money to provide 415 parcels for old people, each containing £1-worth of Christmas cheer. The names of old people who benefit from this magnificent effort are revised each year and every person is visited before Christmas. One year a 30-foot high tree was delivered and putting it up meant dislocating the traffic outside Christ's College for some time. 62 12 08

1963 04 08

Abbeyfields Cambridge Society, help old people remain self-supporting within community, buys first of 18 houses it hopes to acquire in Cambridge [15.11]

1963 12 21

One third of the institutions which house our old people are just former workhouses. Terrified of losing their individuality in an institution plenty of old folk prefer merely to exist in poverty-stricken solitude. The real problem is of lonely old age – and no place can be lonelier for an old person than a 60-bed workhouse dormitory full of strangers. But the Abbeyfield Society integrates people in their own neighbourhood in houses with separate bed-sitting rooms with personal belongings and an electric hot-plate for minor cooking. Now one may be set up in Cambridge. 62 12 21

1964 11 18

Cherry Trees, a club for the elderly, has opened in new buildings in St Matthew's Street which have been donated by Miss Evelyn Boake. It will be run by the W.V.S. on similar lines to their successful Hill Top Club on Castle Hill. The main room with a lounge opens out to a sun terrace. The décor is rich and colourful with easy chairs in orange blue, green and red. Coffees and lunches will be served each weekday to men and women of pensionable age who are not in full employment. At present the main problem is obtaining sufficient volunteers to help serve. 64 11 18

1965

Simon community to start; aim a house for misfit dossers & alcoholics where live without being institutionalised

1965 05 06

Oban Court flatlets for elderly people in Union Lane; have kitchenettes, bed-sitting room and dressing room with washbasin and lavatory. The double ones have bathroom. To be officially opened – 65 05 06

1966 02 15

Ely Diocesan Home for unmarried and pregnant girls – feature – 66 02 15a

1966 06 15

Simon Community a year old, but still no hostel – 66 06 15

1966 11 04

Bene't Hostel, Cambridge's only hostel for girls closes; has been on verge of bankruptcy for much of its 23 year history; gave shelter to women stranded in city; was used by women teachers and social workers as well as girls sent by welfare organisations; now accommodation easier to rent – 66 11 04 girls now remanded 2-3 weeks go to police cell or Holloway [16.2]

1967

Seymour House day centre for elderly opened [15.8]

1967 02 28

Edward Storey almshouses originally built in 1729 for clergymen's widows; houses built in 1844 converted to flats – feature - 67 02 28a

1968

Harvey Housing Association flatlets for unsupported mothers open [5.6]

1968

Simon community open in former pub East Rd

1968 09 31

Local authority homes for old or handicapped people – feature – 68 09 13

1969 05 18

Edward Storey Foundation Trust sell 5 lots of city centre land for 521,000 as want to rebuild Shelley Row almshouses [6.5]

1969 04 09

Simon Community home for vagrants – profile – 69 04 09, 09a

1969 04 25

Abbeyfield Cambridge Society houses for elderly – feature – 69 04 25

1970

1970 01 14

Simon community derelict pub on East Road taken over as place of refuge is to close – 70 01 14
alcoholics to be banned altogether; should not have mixed drinkers & non-drinkers, allow continue;
change name to Cyrenians to avoid confusion London organisation

1970 08 13

Children's Relief International investigation – 70 08 13 & a

1970 09 15

Several charities to merge in bid to build new almshouses on Old Manor House site at Church Street,
Chesterton to replace old Wray's Court Houses; Henry Wray trustees apply city council – 70 09 15

1970 12 21

Victoria Homes demolish part building make way modern flatlets for old people [10]

1971 05 10

National Federation Old Age Pensioners association founded Cambridge branch [15.4]

1971 07 07

Ely Diocesan Unmarried Mother & baby home closes after 50 years due lack of demand [5.4]

1971 09 07

Harvey Housing Association flats for unsupported mothers with day nursery – feature – 71 09 07

1971 11

East Barnwell Community Centre Neighbourhood Club [15.5]

1972 12 06

Jackenetts new almshouses, Church Street open [4.1]

1972 05 08

Dr Barnardo's children's home closed, bought for Social Services boys' hostel [5.5]

1972 09 15

Salvation Army close White Ribbon Hostel, East Road after nearly 50 years; County Council take
over [5.7]

1973 11 10

Cambridge Night Shelter set up as Charity, has King St accommodation for 17, (closed 1974 as all
helpers had flu) [4.2, 11]

1973 11 19

The cost of bringing the White Ribbon Hotel at East Road, Cambridge up to the standard needed to
meet fire safety regulations and public health requirements now about £4,000 – nearly three times the
amount originally estimated. Until last April the hotel was run by the Salvation Army as a hostel for
city working men with no family roots. But, because of the high cost of maintaining the building and
bringing it up to the new standards, the Salvation Army moved out and the County council took over
the building. Cambridge city council have told the county that they will not pay any more than £750
73 11 19

1974 06 06

Storeys House 49 flats elderly women Mount Pleasant opened, Edward Storey Foundation one of
richest in country with income £12,000 [17.4]

1974 08 02

The White Ribbon hostel in East Road, Cambridge, which provides a home for 30 working men with no family backgrounds, has been declared a great fire hazard by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service. For many years the hostel was run by the Salvation Army but they were forced to give up when the high cost of bringing the building up to fire safety standards was discovered last year. The building was then run by Cambridgeshire Mental Welfare Association. But because of other commitments, they have handed over the administration to the county council. Eventually the authorities hope to replace the old buildings with new ones. But no swift action is likely in rebuilding because of the present serious shortage of money in local government circles 74 08 02

1974 12 13

Council plans to buy Pound Hill property for Night Shelter frustrated, it moves to temporary accommodation in run-down almshouses St Paul's road; Cyrenians play major part in running this & also medium-stay hostel in East Road & community house for long-stay individuals in Short St [4.3, 11]

1975

Drinking problems clinic opened at Fulbourn Hospital [4.7]

1975 04 15

Mill Road houses open for drunks, opposition; [4.4]

1975 10 17

Cambridge desperately needs cheap accommodation for dossers, a Cambridge police commander claimed. This was preferable to the free accommodation once provided by Cambridge Night Shelter whose facilities, he felt, only served to aggravate the city's vagrancy problem that had grown in the past five years. "I have to ask whether life has not been made too easy for alcoholic dossers in Cambridge. Aren't we in fact encouraging them to become what they are by giving money and a place to stay when they need it?" he asked 75 10 17

1975 12 18

Cyrenians allowed house Gonville Place [4.5]

1976 01 28

New Hill Top Club opens Primrose Croft, anon £20,000 donation two years ago [15.6]

1976 04 23

Mill Road houses for drunks pulled down 1976 [4.4]

1976 07 23

Geriatric hospitals are old workhouses, each one days march from the other [15.7]

1976 09 29

A new flats complex for elderly people in Sturton Street, Cambridge, was opened by Mrs Rae Linnett, widow of the former Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University after whom it is named. He was chairman of the appeal which raised money for the scheme which was promoted by the Anchor Housing Association. Linnett House, which includes communal rooms, a laundry room and a warden's flat, is the first new development for the use of Cambridge residents named after a senior member of the University 76 09 29

1977 05 22

Fire at White Ribbon Hostel, condemned as fire hazard, provides shelter for homeless men, county council take over; a doss house for 26 men with one bath between them, damp & filthy, turn away

drunks or drug abusers, violent, no incentive to improve for political considerations & because scheduled for demolition in Kite redevelopment [5.9]

1977 11 01

“City burdened with poverty and misery in some areas”— Rhodes James [16.3]

1978 09 27

Six or seven streets have far more than their share of human problems, ‘area where delinquent attitudes prevail’ [16.4]

1978 11 14

Parsons Court meeting place for elderly opens [15.9]

1978 11 17

Twenty-six men live in the county council-run White Ribbon Hostel in East Road, Cambridge with one bath between them. It is hardly worth bathing, the place is so damp and filthy. The rooms at the back are so rotten they are used just for storage. If you have a bedroom to yourself a week in the hostel will cost you £14.78, just £10 less than a room in the relative luxury of the YMCA. The problem is a practical one: the Hostel is scheduled to be demolished should the Kite redevelopment plans go ahead. The council is thus loath to spend much money on the creaking 19th-century structure.

78 11 17

1978 12 13

One of Cambridge’s well-known characters, Mr William Trevor Hughes, has died at Addenbrooke’s Hospital aged 66. It is believed he had suffered a heart attack, Trevor had appeared before magistrates on some 113 occasions, mainly on drinking charges and was usually found wearing a woolly hat and old overcoat in the city centre. On one occasion a solicitor paid his £3 fine because he had overlooked giving him a Christmas present. A native of St Helens and a former cricket coach Mr Hughes had a wide circle of friends in the University and commerce. 78 12 13 [4.6, 13]

1978 12 22

A remarkable cross-section of the community gathered for the funeral service of a well-known Cambridge personality. There was a former Dean of Jesus College, a police superintendent, booksellers, shopkeepers, a solicitor, market traders and college staff. They heard an address and sang hymns. Then they exchanged reminiscences about the man whose service they were attending, paid tribute to his memory and went away. A regular occurrence in a town like Cambridge, perhaps. A distinguished academic or leading businessman had died, it might be thought. But this service was for a shabby old man with a beard of no fixed abode who had some 113 convictions mainly on drinking charges and who sat and drank in the city centre – Trevor Hughes. 78 12 22

1979 07 05

Church Army plans for hostel Victoria Rd/ Histon Rd approved [5.10]

1980

1980 06 18

First school for ex-prisoners set up 6 years ago in Cambridge to close [16.5]

1980 09 19

‘Turning Point’ organisation establish dry house for addicts [4.8]

1981 11 11

Jason Caesar baby killed [16.6]

1982 01 15

Community nurses along with home helps and the meals-on-wheels service form the basic support for many old people. They treat burnt legs – quite common in cold weather as the elderly tend to sit very close to fires and fall asleep. Many ladies cling stubbornly to the homes in which they have lived for half a century or more, often without central heating, indoor lavatories and in some cases electricity or hot water. Two or three elderly people in Romsey have only gaslight while others insist on using candles. 82 01 15

1982 10 05

Newly-modernised almshouses in King Street were re-opened by Baroness David. They were built in 1880 to replace the original houses dating back to 1647 which had decayed beyond repair. The new houses for single retired women have modern kitchens, bathrooms and central heating. Already they have six tenants. 82 10 05a

1982 11 19

At least 120 homeless people, Church Army (1) & Cyrenians (2) run houses but can only cater for half, both have had applications for new premises blocked; Cyrenians rules are no violence, no drugs & no drink in house; Church Army run like institution as many people have lived in institutions all their lives & would deteriorate if outside one, 36 men in three dormitories, one bath & one shower – Stop Press [9]

1982 12 31

Simons House, the Histon Road sheltered housing for the elderly, and the nearby Rackham Close bungalows have won a major Housing Design Award. The scheme was judged to provide ‘most agreeable homes for elderly people’ and many of the residents agree. Mrs Bertha Kent described it ‘as a lovely little place’, Daisy Woodcock says it’s very friendly and John Manning thinks ‘it’s really ideal’. 81 12 31a

1983 07 19

Many old age pensioners in Cambridge are finding it difficult to struggle to the main Post Office and harder still to stand, often in a long queue, to collect their pensions. The News deserves full credit for highlighting the plight of many frail, elderly residents. The lack of hospital beds for long stay patients means that more than 80 former residents are now separated. There is also a chronic shortage of accommodation in old peoples’ homes and a shortage of warden-supervised sheltered housing – Chairman, City Housing Committee 83 07 19 p6

1985 01 21

An old playschool bus has been fitted out with bench seats and facilities to make hot drinks and sandwiches with an informal meeting area upstairs. It will stand on waste land next to the Lion Yard car park as a drop-in centre to provide a warm, sheltered meeting place for the homeless, unemployed and disadvantaged people of Cambridge. There will be two basic rules – no drink and no violence. It is run by the Cyrenians who will offer advice on problems with the DHSS, housing and drinking. But there has been a lot of public hostility 85 01 21

1985 01 31

Plans for hostel for former psychiatric patients, Mill Road [6.1]

1985 07 09

Problems poverty Darwin Drive etc but no help under Urban Aid grant [16.7]

1985 11 25

Stanton House residents celebrated its silver jubilee with a ploughman’s lunch and old-time music hall. It has 28 bedsits with shared bathrooms, giving elderly people their independence while under the watchful eye of a warden who lives on the premises. It was the first sheltered housing scheme to open in Cambridge and has proved very popular. But the fact that residents are made so comfortable

means they live longer, and more and more homes of this kind are needed. Now Mill Road maternity hospital and St Philip's School in Thoday Street are to be converted. 85 11 25

1985 12 23

Christmas is just another day for some residents of the Church Housing Association in Willow Walk. But despite the distinct lack of enthusiasm Captain Andrew Entecott and his helpers are busy at work. The cook will be dishing up turkey and all the trimmings for 36 men and gifts will be presented in the afternoon. The Cyrenian's home in Short Street is like a big happy family and they have planned a Christmas meal. But many homeless people will be wandering the streets with nowhere to go 85 12 23

1986 03 17

Railway House Association provides accommodation for youngsters in houses on Mill Road bridge – 86 03 17a

1986 08 22

The Church Housing Trust's new hostel in Victoria Road aims to get away from an institutional set-up with single rooms and bedsits for 75 homeless people. Alcohol will be banned and residents encouraged to improve their lifestyle to enable them to live in the community again. Nearby home owners have been reassured that problems will be few and far between because if residents have been drinking they keep away as they don't want to lose their accommodation. The Trust's existing premises in Willow Walk will be also retained. New-style accommodation for homeless planned in £.75m development Victoria Ave for Church Housing Trust who have run Dickensian- style dormitories at Willow Walk since beginning of century 86 08 22 [6,2,7]

1986 09 22

Church Army seeking permission to build new accommodation in place of its Willow Walk premises [5.9, 8]

1987

Church Housing Trust hostel opened Victoria Road, takes 70 people, replaces Willow Walk, no alcohol, drunk or troublesome lose home [NS2.6]

1987 03 24

The Railway House Association stands as a chilling monument to the suffering, heartache and degradation inflicted on youngsters in the Cambridge area. Many of those who have sought sanctuary have been subjected to physical violence, neglect, mental abuse and sexual crimes. In the last year the Mill Road hostel, which consists of three houses divided into 12 flats, has taken in 26 young people who might otherwise have been sleeping rough. But another 60 have had to be turned away. 87 03 24a & b

1987 10 02

The City Council are negotiating to buy a £300,000 16-bedroom hotel in Chesterton Road with a large dining room, lounge, extensive kitchens and parking for 15 cars. All carpets, furniture, bedding and crockery are included in the price. It will be used to provide bed-and-breakfast for homeless families waiting for permanent accommodation and will work out cheaper in the long run. Property values are increasing rapidly and it could be sold at a profit if the number of homeless families falls substantially. But one outraged neighbour described it as an upmarket dosshouse not appropriate for the area. 87 10 02

1988 06 13

The first residents have moved into Ditchburn Place, the former Mill Road Maternity Hospital which is being turned into an assortment of 100 flats and houses for young single people and elderly couples. A small number of units have been built for people who have moved out of psychiatric institutions. When complete next year it will incorporate a laundry, restaurant, coffee bar and day centre for the

frail and elderly. It is a very attractive scheme, offering a higher standard than the private sector could have afforded and is unlikely to be repeated in current financial circumstances. 88 06 13a

1988 11 26

Cambridge has nearly double national average of children in care ¢CEN 26.11.88

1989 02 09

Rent arrears rise - "people in state of poverty" ¢CEN 9.2.89

1989 02 25

City lottery wound up after 13 years ¢CEN 25.2.89

1989 03 04

Church Housing Association hostel Willow Walk to be renovated, closed 1986 when new premises opened Victoria Rd ¢CEN 4.3.89

1989 06 07

Cambridge's homelessness problem is getting worse, experts say. Officials from the city environmental health department were so worried they went out on the street at night to look for people sleeping rough. But they only found two middle-aged tramps and feel they may have looked in the wrong places. There are more than 5,000 people on the housing register and last year the council housed 241 homeless people. Up to 50 families are being forced to live in hostel accommodation because they cannot find anywhere to rent or afford to buy a place of their own. 89 06 07a

1989 12 20

Ditchburn Place, the former Mill Road Workhouse celebrates transformation into home for the elderly and meeting place for the community – 89 12 20a

1990 02 12

Cambridge's first soup kitchen has been set up at the homeless drop-in centre, the Bus Project. Winter Comfort will be running the service which provides soup, hot drinks and sandwiches until March. About 12 people per night have been taking advantage of the service. 90 02 12

1990 05 25

Buchan House residential home and day centre to be kept closed until county find company to run it under new privatisation policies – 90 05 25b

1990 07 05

Duke of Edinburgh opens Ditchburn Place – 90 07 05c, 06, 09b

1990 11 221

Hope Nursing Home new facilities; 54 residents - 90 11 21b